
Stendhal



THE DUCHESS OF PALLIANO

Palermo, July 22nd, 1838.

I am nothing of a naturalist, I have only a very moderate acquaintance with the Greek language; my chief object in coming to visit Sicily has not been to observe the phenomena of Etna, nor to throw light, for my own or for other people's benefit, on all that the old Greek writers have said about Sicily. I sought first of all the pleasure of the eyes, which is considerable in this strange land. It resembles Africa, or so people say; but what to my mind is quite certain is that it resembles Italy only in its devouring passions. The Sicilians are a race of whom one might well say that the word *impossible* does not exist for them

once they are inflamed by love or by hatred, and hatred, in this fair land, never arises from any pecuniary interest.

I observe that in England, and above all in France, one often hears people speak of *Italian passion*, of the frenzied passion which was to be found in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In our time, that noble passion is dead, quite dead, among the classes that have become infected with the desire to imitate French ways, and the modes of behaviour in fashion in Paris or in London.

I am well aware that I may be reminded that, from the time of Charles V (1530), Naples, Florence and Rome even were inclined to imitate Spanish ways; but were not these noble social customs based upon the boundless respect which every man worthy of the name ought to have for the motions of his own heart? Far from excluding emphasis, they exaggerated it, whereas the first maxim of the *fats* who imitated the Duc de Richelieu, round about 1760, was to appear *moved by nothing*. The maxim of the English dandies, whom they now copy at Naples in preference to the French fats, is it not to appear bored by everything, superior to everything?

Thus *Italian passion* has ceased to exist, for a century past, among the good society of that country.

In order to form some idea of this *Italian passion*, of which our novelists speak with such assurance, I have been obliged to turn to history; and even then the major histories, written by men of talent, and often too pompous, give us practically no details. They do not condescend to take note of the foolish actions except when these are committed by kings or princes. I have had recourse to the local history of each city; but I am appalled by the abundance of material. Every little town proudly offers you its history in three or four quarto volumes of print, and seven or eight volumes in manuscript; the latter almost undecipherable, teeming with abbreviations, giving unusual shapes to the letters, and, at the most interesting moments, crammed with forms of speech in use in the district but unintelligible twenty leagues away. For, in the whole of this fair land of Italy, whose surface love has sown with so many tragedies, three cities only, Florence, Siena and Rome, speak more or less as they write; everywhere else the written language is a hundred leagues apart from the spoken.

What is known as Italian passion, that is to say the passion that seeks its own satisfaction, and not to give one's neighbour an enhanced idea of oneself, begins with the revival of society, in the twelfth century, and dies out, among people of refinement at least, about the year 1734. At this date the Bourbons ascend the throne of Naples in the person of Don Carlos, son of a Farnese heiress married as his second wife to Philip V, that melancholy grandson of Louis XIV, so intrepid amid shot and shell, so listless, and so passionately fond of music. We know that for twenty-four years the sublime eunuch Farinelli sang to him every day three favourite airs, which never varied.

A philosophic mind may find something curious in the details of a passion as felt in Rome or Naples, but I must say that nothing seems to me more absurd than those novels that give Italian names to their characters. Are we not all agreed that passions alter whenever we move a hundred leagues farther north? Is love the same thing at Marseilles as in Paris? At most, we may say that countries which have long been subjected to the same form of government shew a sort of outward similarity in their social customs.

Scenery, like passions and music, changes also whenever we move three or four degrees farther north. A Neapolitan landscape would seem absurd in Venetia, were there not a convention, even in Italy, to admire the fine works of nature round Naples. In Paris, we go one better, we imagine that the appearance of the forests and tilled plains is absolutely the same round Naples as round Venice, and would like Canaletto, for instance, to use absolutely the same colours as Salvator Rosa.

But the crowning absurdity, surely, is an English lady endowed with all the perfections of her Island, but considered not to be in a position to portray *hatred* and *love*, even in that Island: Mrs. Anne Radcliffe giving Italian names and grand passions to the characters of her celebrated novel: *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents*.

I shall make no attempt to adorn the simplicity, the occasionally startling bluntness of the all too true narrative which I submit to the reader's indulgence; for instance, I translate literally the reply of the Duchess of Palliano to the declaration of love made by her cousin Marcello Capece. This family monograph occurs, for some reason, at the end of the second volume of a manuscript history of Palermo, of which I can furnish no details.

This narrative, which I have shortened considerably, much to my regret (I omit a mass of characteristic features), consists of the ultimate adventures of the ill-fated house of Carafa, rather than of the interesting history of a single passion. Literary vanity suggests to me that perhaps it might not have been impossible for me to enhance the interest of several situations by developing them farther, that is to say, by guessing and relating to the reader, with details, what the

characters felt. But can I, a young Frenchman, born north of Paris, be quite sure of my power to guess what was felt by these Italian hearts in the year 1559? At the very most, I can hope to be able to guess what may appear elegant and thrilling to French readers in 1838.

This passionate manner of feeling which prevailed in Italy about the year 1559 required deeds, not words. And so the reader will find very little conversation in the following narrative. This is a handicap to my translation, accustomed as we are to the long conversations of the characters in our fiction; for them a conversation is a duel. The story for which I claim all the reader's indulgence shews a singular element introduced by the Spaniards into Italian manners. I have nowhere departed from the office of a translator. The faithful reproduction of the mental attitudes of the sixteenth century, and even of the narrative style of the chronicler who, apparently, was a gentleman attached to the household of the unfortunate Duchess of Palliano, constitutes, to my mind, the chief merit of this tragic tale, if there be any merit in it.

The strictest Spanish etiquette prevailed at the *court* of the Duke of Palliano. Bear in mind that each Cardinal, each Roman Prince had a similar court, and you will be able to form some idea of the spectacle furnished, in 1559, by the civilisation of the city of Rome. Do not forget that this was the period in which Philip II, requiring for one of his intrigues the support of two Cardinals, bestowed upon each of them a revenue of two hundred thousand lire in ecclesiastical benefices. Rome, although lacking an effective army, was the capital of the world. Paris, in 1559, was a city of barbarians not without charm.



LITERAL TRANSLATION OF AN OLD NARRATIVE WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1566

Gian Pietro Carafa, although sprung from one of the noblest families of the Kingdom of Naples, behaved in a harsh, rude, violent manner more befitting a keeper of flocks or herds. He assumed the long coat (the cassock) and left at an early age for Rome, where he benefited by the favour of his cousin, Olivero Carafa, Cardinal and Archbishop of Naples. Alexander VI, that mighty man, who knew everything and could do anything, made him his *cameriere* (roughly what we should call nowadays groom of the chambers). Julius II nominated him Archbishop of Chieti; Pope Paul created him Cardinal, and finally, after endless intriguing and disputes among the Cardinals enclosed in Conclave, he was elected Pope, taking the name of Paul IV; he was then seventy-eight years old. The very Cardinals who had just called him to the Throne of Saint Peter soon shuddered when they thought of the firmness and fierce, inexorable piety of the master whom they had set over themselves.

The news of this unexpected election caused a revolution at Naples and Palermo. Before many days had passed, Rome saw arrive within her gates innumerable members of the illustrious house of Carafa. All of them found places; but, as was only natural, the Pope shewed particular favour to his three nephews, sons of the Conte di Montorio, his brother.

Don Giovanni, the eldest, who was already married, was made Duke of Palliano. This duchy, taken from Marcantonio Colonna, to whom it belonged, included a large number of villages and small towns. Don Carlo, the second of His Holiness's nephews, was a Knight of Malta and had seen active service; he was created Cardinal, Legate of Bologna and First Minister. He was a man of great determination; loyal to the traditions of his family, he made bold to hate the most powerful monarch in the world (Philip II, King of Spain and of the Indies), and furnished him with proofs of his hatred. As for the new Pope's third nephew, Don Antonio Carafa, since he was married, the Pope made him Marchese di Montebello. Finally he proposed to give in marriage to Francis, Dauphin of France and son of King Henry II, a daughter whom his brother had got by a second marriage; Paul IV was to settle upon her as her dowry the Kingdom of Naples, which would first be taken from Philip II, King of Spain. The Carafa family hated this mighty king, who, with the help of the said family's own weaknesses, succeeded in wiping it out, as you shall see.

After he had ascended the throne of Saint Peter, the mightiest in the world, and one which, at that time, eclipsed even that of the illustrious Spanish monarch, Paul IV, as we have seen occur with most of his successors, set an example of all the virtues. He was a great Pope and a great Saint; he set to work to reform abuses within the Church, and by so doing to avoid the General Council for which all parties at the Roman Court were clamouring, but which a wise policy refused to grant.

In accordance with the custom of that age, which our age has let fall into oblivion, the custom which forbade a Sovereign to repose his confidence in men who might have interests other than his own, the States of his Holiness were governed despotically by his three nephews. The Cardinal was First Minister and carried out his uncle's wishes; the Duke of Palliano had been created General of the forces of Holy Church; and the Marchese di Monte-bello, Captain of the Palace Guard, allowed only such persons as it suited him to admit to cross its threshold. Soon these young men were committing the wildest excesses; they began by appropriating for their own use the possessions of the families opposed to their rule. The people did not know where to turn to obtain justice. Not only had they cause to be afraid for their possessions, but, horrible to relate in the land of the chaste Lucrece, the honour of their wives and daughters was not safe. The Duke of Palliano and his brothers carried off the most beautiful women; it was enough to have been so unfortunate as to take their fancy. People were amazed to see them shew no respect for exalted birth; worse still, they were in no way restrained by the sanctity of the cloister. The people, in despair, knew of no one to whom they might complain, so great was the terror which the three brothers had inspired in everyone who approached the Pope's presence; they were insolent to the Ambassadors even.

The Duke had married, before his uncle's rise to greatness, Violante di Cardone, of a family of Spanish origin which, at Naples, belonged to the highest aristocracy.

It was numbered in the *Seggio di nido*.

Violante, famed for her rare beauty and for the charm which she knew how to assume when she sought to attract, was famed even more for her overweening pride. But, to do her justice, it would have been difficult to have a moro exalted mind, as she shewed to all the world by admitting nothing, in the hour of her death, to the Capuchin friar who came to

shrive her. She knew by heart and used to repeat with infinite charm the admirable *Orlando* of Messer Ariosto, most of the *Sonnets* of the divine Petrarch, the *Tales* of Pecorone, etc. But she was even more entrancing when she deigned to entertain her company with the odd ideas that suggested themselves to her mind.

She had a son who was styled Duca di Cavi. Her brother, Don Ferrante, Conte d'Aliffe, came to Rome, attracted by the prosperous state of his brothers-in-law.

The Duke of Palliano maintained a splendid court; the scions of the first families of Naples fought for the honour of belonging to it. Among those whom he most cherished, Rome marked out, by its admiration, Marcello Capece (of the *Seggio di Nido*), a young gentleman celebrated at Naples for his intelligence, no less than for the godlike beauty which heaven had bestowed upon him.

The Duchess had as favourite Diana Brancaccio, then thirty years of age, closely related to the Marchesa di Montebello, her sister-in-law. It was rumoured in Rome that, with this favourite, she threw off her pride; that she confided to her all her secrets. But these secrets related only to politics; the Duchess aroused passions in others, but reciprocated none.

On the advice of Cardinal Carafa, the Pope declared war against the King of Spain, and the King of France sent to the Pope's assistance an army commanded by the Duc de Guise.

But we must confine ourselves to events at home, inside the court of the Duke of Palliano.

Capece had long appeared more or less mad; he was seen to perform the strangest actions; the fact was that the poor young man had fallen passionately in love with the Duchess, his *mistress*, but dared not reveal his condition to her. At the same time, he did not absolutely despair of attaining his end, for he saw the Duchess intensely annoyed by a husband who neglected her. The Duke of Palliano was all powerful in Rome, and the Duchess knew, without any shadow of doubt, that almost every day the most famous beauties among the ladies of Rome came to visit her husband in her own palazzo, and this was an insult to which she could not grow reconciled. Among the chaplains to His Holiness Pope Paul IV was a respectable cleric with whom he used to repeat his breviary. This gentleman, at the risk of his own downfall, and perhaps at the instigation of the Spanish Ambassador, made bold one day to reveal to the Pope all his nephews' misdeeds. The holy pontiff was ill with grief; he tried not to believe the report; but overwhelming evidence came in from every side. It was on the first day of the year 1559 that the event occurred which confirmed all the Pope's suspicions, and perhaps brought him to a decision. It was therefore, on the actual Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord, a coincidence which greatly aggravated the offence in the eyes of so pious a Sovereign, that Andréa Lanfranchi, secretary to the Duke of Palliano, gave a magnificent supper to Cardinal Carafa, and wishing to add to the excitement of the palate that of the flesh, invited to this supper Martuccia, one of the most beautiful, most notorious and wealthiest courtesans of the noble city of Rome. Fate so willed it that Capece, the Duke's favourite, the same who was secretly in love with the Duchess, and was reckoned the handsomest man in the capital of the world, had for some time past been attached to Martuccia. On the evening in question he searched for her in all the places where he had any hope of finding her. Not seeing her anywhere, and having heard that there was a supper party at Lanfranchi's house, he had a suspicion of what was happening, and towards midnight appeared at Lanfranchi's door, accompanied by a numerous body of armed men.

The door was opened to him; he was invited to sit down and partake of the feast; but, after a few words had been exchanged with a certain constraint, he made a signal to Martuccia to rise and leave the house with him. While she was hesitating, greatly confused and with an inkling of what was going to happen, Capece rose from the chair on which he was sitting, and, going up to the girl, took her by the hand, and attempted to carry her off with him. The Cardinal, in whose honour she had come to the party, strongly opposed her departure; Capece persisted, endeavouring to drag her from the room.

The Cardinal First Minister, who, that evening, had assumed a garb very different from that which indicated his high rank, took his sword in hand, and endeavoured, with the vigour and courage which all Rome knew him to possess, to prevent the girl from leaving. Marcello, blind with rage, summoned his men; but they were mostly Neapolitans, and, when they recognised first of all the Duke's secretary and then the Cardinal, whom the unusual clothes which he was wearing had at first disguised from them, they sheathed their swords again, declined to fight, and intervened to settle the dispute.

During this uproar, Martuccia, who was surrounded by the rest, while Marcello Capece kept hold of her left hand, was clever enough to escape. As soon as Marcello noticed her absence he hastened after her, and his men all followed him.

But the darkness of the night gave rise to the strangest reports, and on the morning of January 2nd the capital was filled with accounts of the perilous encounter which had occurred, it was, said, between the Cardinal's nephew and Marcello Capece. The Duke of Palliano, Commander in Chief of the forces of the Church, understood the affair to be more serious than it actually was, and, as he was not on the best of terms with his brother the Minister, had Lanfranchi arrested that same night, while early on the following morning Marcello himself was put in prison. Then it was discovered that no life had been lost, and that these imprisonments served only to increase the scandal, the whole of which fell upon the Cardinal's shoulders. The prisoners were quickly set at liberty, and the three brothers combined their enormous influence to hush up the affair. They expected at first to be successful; but, on the third day, the whole story came to the ears of the Pope. He sent for his two nephews and spoke to them as a Prince might speak who was so pious and so profoundly shocked.

On the fifth day of January, which saw a great number of Cardinals assembled in the congregation of the Holy Office, the Pope was the first to speak of this horrible affair; he asked the Cardinals present how they had dared refrain from bringing it to his knowledge:

"You keep silence! And yet the scandal affects the sublime dignity with which you are invested! Cardinal Carafa has had the audacity to appear in the public streets in lay attire and with a drawn sword in his hand. And with what object? To take forcible possession of a shameless harlot!"

One may imagine the deathly silence that prevailed among all his courtiers during this outburst against the First Minister. Here was an old man of eighty inveighing against a beloved nephew, the master until then of his will. In his indignation, the Pope spoke of taking the hat from his nephew.

The Pope's anger was fanned by the Ambassador of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who came to complain to him of a recent insult on the part of the Cardinal First Minister. This Cardinal, so powerful until then, presented himself before His Holiness in the course of his duty. The Pope kept him for four whole hours in the ante-room, waiting where everyone could see him, then sent him away without admitting him to an audience. One may imagine the blow to the Minister's unbounded pride. The Cardinal was annoyed, but not disposed to yield; he felt that an old man bowed down with years, dominated all his life long by the love he bore his family, and moreover little accustomed to the handling of temporal matters, would be obliged to have recourse to his activity. The saintly Pope's virtue won the day; he summoned the Cardinals together, and after gazing at them for a long time without speaking, finally burst into tears and had no hesitation in making what apology he could.

"The feebleness of age," he said to them, "and the attention that I pay to matters of religion, in which, as you know, I am trying to destroy all the abuses, have led me to entrust my temporal authority to my three nephews; they have abused that authority, and I banish them now for ever."

A brief was then read by which the nephews were deprived of all their dignities and confined to miserable villages. The Cardinal Prime Minister was banished to Civit  Lavinia, the Duke of Palliano to Soriano, and the Marchese to Montebello; by this brief, the Duke was deprived of his fixed revenue, which amounted to seventy-two thousand piastres (more than a million in 1838).

There could be no question of disobeying these stern orders: the Carafa had as enemies and watchers the entire population of Rome, who detested them.

The Duke of Palliano, escorted by the Conte d'Aliffe, his brother-inlaw, and by Leonardo del Cardine, established his quarters in the little village of Soriano, while the Duchess and her mother-inlaw came to live at Gallese, a wretched hamlet within two leagues of Soriano.

The neighbourhood is charming, but they were in exile; and they were banished from Rome, where but a little while since they had held an insolent sway.

Marcello Capece had followed his mistress, with the rest of the courtiers, to the wretched village to which she had been banished. Instead of the devotion of all Rome this woman, so powerful a few days earlier, who had exulted in her position with all the arrogance of her pride, now found herself surrounded only by simple peasants, whose very amazement kept her in mind of her downfall. She had no consolation; her uncle was so old that probably death would overtake him before he had recalled his nephews, and, to complete their misfortune, the three brothers hated one another. It was even said that the Duke and the Marchese, who were not liable to the fiery passions of the Cardinal, alarmed by his excesses, had

gone the length of denouncing them to the Pope their uncle.

Amidst the horror and shame of this abject disgrace, something occurred which, unfortunately for the Duchess and for Capece himself, shewed plainly that, in Rome, it had not been a genuine passion that had drawn him in the wake of Martuccia.

One day when the Duchess had sent for him to give him an order, he found himself alone with her, a thing which did not happen more than once, perhaps, in a whole year. When he saw that there was no one else in the room in which the Duchess received him, Capece stopped short and remained silent. He went to the door to see whether there was anyone that could hear them in the next room, then found courage to speak as follows:

“Signora, do not vex yourself, do not take offence at the strange words which I am about to have the temerity to utter. For a long time past I have loved you more than life itself. If, in a rash moment, I have ventured to gaze as a lover upon your heavenly beauty, you must impute the fault not to me, but to the supernatural force which urges and distracts me. I am in torment, I burn; I ask for nothing to quench the flame that is consuming me, but simply that your generosity may take pity upon a servant filled with misgivings and humility.”

The Duchess appeared surprised, and, what was more, annoyed.

“Why, Marcello, what have you ever seen in me,” she said to him, “to encourage you to speak to me of love? Does my life, does my conversation so far depart from the rules of decent behaviour as to afford you any justification for such insolence? How could you have the audacity to suppose that I could give myself to you or to any other man, except my lord and master? I forgive you for what you have said to me, because I consider that you are in a frenzied state; but take care not to make the same mistake again, or I swear I will have you punished for both pieces of impertinence at once.”

The Duchess left him in a towering passion, and indeed Capece had failed to observe the laws of prudence: he should have let his love be guessed and not have spoken. He stood there speechless, greatly alarmed lest the Duchess should tell her husband of what had happened.

But the sequel proved to be very different from his apprehensions. In the solitude of this village, the proud Duchess of Palliano could not help taking into her confidence and revealing what had been said to her to her favourite lady in waiting, Diana Brancaccio. This was a woman of thirty, devoured by burning passions. She had red hair (the chronicler harps again and again upon this peculiarity, which to him seems to account for all Diana Brancaccio’s mad actions). She was hotly in love with Domiziano Fornari, a gentleman attached to the household of the Marchese di Montebello. She wished to take him as her husband; but would the Marchese and his wife, with whom she had the honour to be connected by ties of “blood, ever consent to her marriage to a man actually in their service? This obstacle was insurmountable, or seemed so at least.

There was but one chance of success: she would have to obtain some practical support from the Duke of Palliano, the Marchese’s elder brother, and Diana was not without some hope in this direction. The Duke treated her as one of his family rather than as a servant. He was a man with an element of simplicity and goodness in his nature, and attached infinitely less importance than his brothers to questions of pure etiquette. Although, as a young man would, the Duke made full use of all the advantages of his exalted position, and was anything but faithful to his wife, he loved her dearly, and, so far as one might judge, could not refuse her any favour were she to ask it with a certain amount of persistence.

The confession which Capece had ventured to make to the Duchess seemed to the dark mind of Diana an unlooked-for piece of good fortune. Her mistress had been until then maddeningly prudent; should she prove capable of feeling passion, were she to commit a sin, at every moment she would need Diana, who in turn might look for anything in the world from a woman whose secrets she would know.

So far from giving any hint to the Duchess first of all of what she owed to herself, and then of the terrible danger to which she would be exposing herself amid so sharp-sighted a court, Diana, carried away by the heat of her passion, spoke of Marcello Capece to her mistress as she was in the habit of speaking to herself of Domiziano Fornari. In the long conversations with which they beguiled their solitude, she found some pretext daily for recalling to the Duchess’s memory the charm and beauty of that poor Marcello who seemed so unhappy; he belonged, like the Duchess, to one of the first families in Naples, his manners were as noble as his blood, and he lacked only those worldly possessions which a caprice of fortune might at any time bestow upon him, in order to become in every respect the equal of the woman whom he ventured to love.

Diana was delighted to observe that the first effect of these speeches was to increase the confidence which the Duchess placed in her.

She did not forget to give a report of what was happening to Marcello Capece. During the burning heat of that summer the Duchess often strolled in the woods which surround Gallese. At the close of day she would await the turn of the sea breeze on the charming hills which rise in the midst of those woods, hills from the summit of which the sea is visible at a distance of less than two leagues.

Without infringing the strict laws of etiquette, Marcello also might stroll in these woods: he would conceal himself there, it was said, and took care only to catch the Duchess's eye when she had been led to think kindly of him by the speeches of Diana Brancaccio. The latter would then give Marcello a signal.

Diana, seeing her mistress on the point of yielding to the fatal passion the seeds of which she herself had sown in the other's heart, herself gave way to the violent love which Domiziano Fornari had inspired in her. Now at last she was certain of being able to marry him. But Domiziano was a sober-minded young man, cold and reserved by nature; the extravagances of his fiery mistress, so far from attaching him to her, soon became distasteful to him. Diana Brancaccio was closely related to the Carafa; he might be certain of being stabbed, should the faintest rumour of his amours come to the ears of the terrible Cardinal Carafa who, albeit younger than the Duke of Palliano, was, as a matter of fact, the real head of the family.

The Duchess had yielded, some time since, to Capece's passion, when one fine day Domiziano Fornari was not to be found in the village to which the court of the Marchese di Montebello had been banished. He had disappeared: it was learned later on that he had taken ship in the little port of Nettuno; doubtless he had changed his name, and nothing more was ever heard of him.

How is one to describe Diana's feelings? After listening good-humouredly for some time to her inveighings against fate, one day the Duchess of Palliano let her see that this topic of conversation seemed to her to be exhausted. Diana saw herself scorned by her lover; her heart was a prey to the most cruel forces; she drew the strangest conclusion from the momentary irritation which the Duchess had felt on hearing a repetition of her complaints. Diana persuaded herself that it was the Duchess who had compelled Domiziano Fornari to leave her for ever, and who, moreover, had furnished him with the means of travelling. This fantastic idea had no basis apart from certain remonstrances which the Duchess had once addressed to her. Her suspicion was swiftly followed by revenge. She sought an audience of the Duke and told him all that had occurred between his wife and Marcello. The Duke refused to believe her.

"Bear in mind," he told her, "that during the last fifteen years I have not had the least fault to find with the Duchess; she has withstood the temptations of the court and the pitfalls of the brilliant position we enjoyed in Rome; the most attractive Princes, the Duc de Guise himself even, the General of the French Army, found it a waste of time, and you would have her yield to a mere Esquire!"

As ill luck would have it, the Duke finding time hang on his hands at Soriano, the village to which he had been banished, and which was but a couple of leagues from that in which his wife was living, Diana managed to secure frequent audiences from him, without their coming to the Duchess's knowledge. Diana had an amazing faculty of invention; her passion made her eloquent. She furnished the Duke with a mass of details; revenge had become her sole pleasure. She repeated that, almost every night, Capece made his way into the Duchess's room about eleven o'clock, and did not leave until two or three in the morning. These reports made so little impression, at first, on the Duke's mind, that he refused to take the trouble to ride a couple of leagues at midnight in order to go to Gallese and pay a surprise visit to his wife's room.

But one evening when he happened to be at Gallese, the sun had set, and yet it was still light; Diana, quite dishevelled, made her way into the room in which the Duke was. Everyone else withdrew. She informed him that Marcello Capece had just entered the Duchess's bedroom. The Duke, who doubtless was in an ill humour at the moment, took up his dagger and ran to his wife's room, which he entered by a secret door. There he found Marcello Capece. The lovers did, indeed, change colour when they saw him come in; but, as a matter of fact, there was nothing reprehensible in their attitude. The Duchess was in bed, engaged in making a note of a small sum which she had just paid; a maid was in the room; Marcello was on his feet, at a distance of three yards from the bed.

The Duke in his fury seized Marcello by the throat, and dragged him into an adjoining closet, where he ordered him to fling away the dirk and dagger with which he was armed. After which the Duke summoned the men of his guard, by whom

Marcello was at once led away to the prisons of Soriano.

The Duchess was left in her own house, but under close guard.

The Duke was by no means a cruel man; it appears that he did think of concealing the scandal of the affair, so as not to be obliged to have recourse to the extreme measures which honour required of him. He wished it to be thought that Marcello was being kept in prison for a wholly different reason, and taking as a pretext a number of huge toads which Marcello had bought at a high price two or three months previously, he gave out that the young man had attempted to poison him. But the true nature of the crime was too well known, and the Cardinal, his brother, sent to ask him when he was going to think of washing out in the blood of the guilty the insult that had been offered to their family.

The Duke called to his assistance the Conte d'Aliffe, his wife's brother, and Antonio Torando, a friend of the family. The three of them, forming a sort of tribunal, passed judgment upon Marcello Capece, accused of adultery with the Duchess.

The instability of human affairs brought it to pass that Pope Pius IV, who succeeded Paul IV, belonged to the Spanish faction. He could refuse nothing to King Philip II, who demanded of him the lives of the Cardinal and of the Duke of Palliano. The brothers were brought before the local tribunal, and from the minutes of the trial which they had to undergo we learn all the circumstances of the death of Marcello Capece.

One of the many witnesses who were called gave evidence as follows:

"We were at Soriano; the Duke, my master, held a long conversation with the Conte d'Aliffe. . . . Late at night we went down into one of the cellars, where the Duke had made ready the cords required for putting the accused to the question. There were present the Duke, the Conte d'Aliffe, Don Antonio Torando and myself.

"The first witness to be called was Captain Camillo Griffone, the intimate friend and confidant of Capece. The Duke addressed him thus:

"Tell the truth, my friend. What do you know of Marcello's doings in the Duchess's room?"

"I know nothing; for the last three weeks and more I have not spoken to Marcello."

"As he refused obstinately to say anything further, the Lord Duke called in some of his guards from outside. Griffone was tied to the cord by the Podestà of Soriano. The guards pulled the cords, and in this way raised the witness four fingers'-breadth from the ground. After the Captain had been suspended thus for fully a quarter of an hour, he said:

"Let me down and I will tell you all I know."

"When they had set him down on the ground, the guards withdrew, and we remained alone in the cellar with him.

"It is true that on several occasions I have gone with Marcello to the Duchess's room," said the Captain, "but I know nothing more than that, because I used to wait for him in a courtyard near at hand until one o'clock in the morning."

"The guards were at once recalled, and, on an order from the Duke, drew him up again, so that his feet were clear of the ground. Presently the Captain cried out:

"Let me down, I will speak the truth. It is true," he went on, "that, for many months past, I have observed that Marcello was making love to the Duchess, and I meant to inform Your Excellency or Don Leonardo. The Duchess used to send every morning to inquire for Marcello; she kept making him little presents, among other things preserves of fruit prepared with great care and very costly;

I have seen Marcello wearing little golden chains of marvellous workmanship which he had obviously had from the Duchess."

"After making this statement, the Captain was taken back to prison. The Duchess's porter was brought in, but said that he knew nothing; he was bound to the cord and raised in the air. After half an hour he said:

"Let me down and I will tell you all I know."

"Once on the ground again, he pretended to know nothing; he was raised once more. After half an hour he was let down; he explained that he had been only a short time in the Duchess's personal service. As it was possible that the man did really know nothing, he was sent back to prison. All this had taken a long time on account of the guards, who were made to leave the room each time. They were intended to suppose that the trial was one of an attempt at poisoning, with the venom extracted from the toads.

"The night was already far advanced when the Duke ordered in Marcello Capece. The guards having left the room,

and the door being duly locked:

“‘What business have you,’ he asked him, ‘in the Duchess’s room, that you stay there until one, two, and sometimes four o’clock in the morning?’

“Marcello denied everything; the guards were called, and he was strung up; the cord dislocated his arms; unable to endure the pain, he asked to be let down; he was set upon a chair; but after that became confused in his speech and did not seem himself to know what he was saying. The guards were called and strung him up once more; after a long spell, he asked to be let down.

“‘It is true,’ he said, ‘that I have entered the Duchess’s apartment at these improper hours; but I was making love to Signora Diana Brancaccio, one of her Excellency’s ladies, to whom I had given a promise of marriage, and who has granted me all, save such things as honour for-bids.’

“Marcello was led back to prison, where he was confronted with the Captain; also with Diana, who denied everything.

“After this Marcello was brought back to the cellar; when we were near the door:

“‘My Lord Duke,’ he said, ‘Your Excellency will recall that he has promised me my life if I tell the whole truth. It is not necessary to give me the cord again; I am going to tell you everything.’

“He then went up to the Duke, and, in a tremulous and barely articulate voice, told him that it was true that he had won the favour of the Duchess. At these words, the Duke flung himself upon Marcello and bit him in the cheek; he then drew his dagger, and I saw that he was on the point of stabbing the culprit. At this point I suggested that it would be as well for Marcello to write down in his own hand what he had just confessed, and that such a document would serve as a justification of His Excellency’s action. We went into the cellar where there were writing materials; but the cord had so injured Marcello’s arm and hand, that he was able to write only these few words: ‘Yes, I have betrayed my lord; yes, I have stolen his honour.’

“The Duke read the words as Marcello wrote them. At this point, he flung himself upon Marcello and struck him three blows with his dagger, from which he expired. Diana Brancaccio was present, within an arm’s-length, more dead than alive, and, no doubt, repenting a thousand times over what she had done.

“‘Woman unworthy to be of noble birth,’ cried the Duke, ‘and sole cause of my dishonour, for which you have laboured to serve your own infamous pleasures, I must now give you the reward of all your treacheries.’

“So saying he seized her by the hair and sawed through her throat with a knife. The wretched woman shed a torrent of blood, and at length fell down dead.

“The Duke had the two bodies flung into a sewer that ran by the prison.”

The young Cardinal Alfonso Carafa, son of the Marchese di Montebello, the one member of the family that Paul IV had kept in his court, felt it his duty to tell him of these events. The Pope’s only answer was:

“And the Duchess, what have they done with her?”

It was generally thought, in Rome, that these words were tantamount to the unfortunate woman’s death warrant. But the Duke could not steel himself to that great sacrifice, either because she was pregnant or because of the intense affection he had felt for her in the past.

Three months after the great act of virtue which the saintly Pope Paul IV had performed in parting from the whole of his family, he fell ill, and, after three months of illness, expired on the 18th of August, 1559.

The Cardinal wrote letter after letter to the Duke of Palliano, incessantly reiterating that their honour demanded the death of the Duchess. Seeing their uncle dead and not knowing what the next Pope’s attitude might be, he was anxious to have the whole affair finished as quickly as possible.

The Duke, a simple man, good natured and far less scrupulous than the Cardinal over mere points of honour, could not bring himself to the terrible extremes demanded of him. He reminded himself that he had frequently been unfaithful to the Duchess, without taking the slightest pains to conceal his infidelities from her, and that they might have led so proud a woman to take her revenge. At the very moment of entering the Conclave, after hearing mass and receiving the Holy Communion, the Cardinal wrote to him again that he was being tormented by these continual delays, and vowed that, if the Duke did not finally make up his mind to do what the honour of their house required of him, he would take no further interest in his affairs, and would make no attempt to be of use to him either in the Conclave or with the new Pope. A reason

quite unconnected with the point of honour helped to determine the Duke's action. Although the Duchess was closely guarded, she contrived (it is said) to send word to Marcantonio Colonna, the Duke's mortal enemy, on account of his Duchy of Palliano which Carafa had secured for himself, that if Marcantonio were to succeed in saving her life and delivering her from captivity, she, for her part, would put him in possession of the fortress of Palliano, the commandant of which was her devoted servant. On the 28th of August, 1559, the Duke sent to Gallese two companies of soldiers. On the 30th, Don Leonardo del Cardine, the Duke's kinsman, and Don Ferrante, Conte d'Aliffe, the Duchess's brother, arrived at Gallese, and entered the Duchess's apartments to take her life. They told her that she was to die; she received the news without the slightest change of countenance. She wished first to make her confession and to hear the Holy Mass. Then, on these two gentlemen's approaching her, she observed that they were not acting in concert. She asked whether there were an order from the Duke, her husband, authorising her death.

"Yes, Signora," replied Don Leonardo.

The Duchess asked to see it; Don Ferrante shewed it to her.

(I find in the report of the Duke's trial the deposition of the friars who were present on this terrible occasion. These depositions are greatly superior to those of the other witnesses, this being due, I should say, to the fact that these monks had no fear when speaking before a court of justice, whereas all the other witnesses had been more or less the accomplices of their master.)

Fra Antonio di Pavia, a Capuchin, gave evidence as follows:

"After mass, at which she devoutly received the Holy Communion, and while we were giving her comfort, the Conte d'Aliffe, brother of the Lady Duchess, entered the room with a cord and a hazel rod of the thickness of my thumb, and about half an ell in length. He bandaged the Duchess's eyes with a handkerchief, which she, with great coolness, pulled lower down over her eyes, so that she should not see. The Conte put the cord round her throat; but, as it did not run well, removed it and drew back a few feet; the Duchess hearing his step pulled the handkerchief from her eyes, and said:

"Well, what is happening now?"

"The Conte answered:

"The cord was not running well, I am going to fetch another, so that you shall not suffer."

"So saying, he left the room; shortly afterwards he returned with another cord, arranged the handkerchief once more over her eyes, placed the cord round her throat, and, passing the rod through the loop, twisted it and so strangled her. The whole affair, on the Duchess's part, was conducted in the tone of an ordinary conversation."

Fra Antonio di Salazar, another Capuchin, concludes his evidence with these words:

"I wished to retire from the pavilion, from a scruple of conscience, so as not to see her die, but the Duchess said to me:

"Do not go away from here, for the love of God."

(Here the friar relates the incidents of her death, exactly as we have reported them.) He adds:

"She died like a good Christian, frequently repeating: '*Credo, credo.*'"

The two friars, who apparently had obtained the necessary authority from their superiors, repeat in their depositions that the Duchess always insisted upon her complete innocence, in all her conversations with them, in all her confessions, and particularly in that preceding the mass at which she received the Holy Communion. If she was guilty, by this act of vanity she cast herself into hell.

When Fra Antonio di Pavia, the Capuchin, was brought face to face with Don Leonardo del Cardine, the friar said:

"My companion said to the Count that it would be as well to wait until the Duchess had been confined; 'she is in the sixth month,' he went on, 'we must not destroy the soul of the poor little creature she is carrying in her womb, he must have an opportunity of baptism.'

"To which the Conte d'Aliffe replied:

"You know that I have to go to Rome, and I do not wish to appear there with this mask on my face," (meaning, "with this insult unavenged.")

Immediately the Duchess was dead, the two Capuchins insisted that her body be opened without delay, so that the rite of baptism might be administered to the child; but the Conte and Don Leonardo would not listen to their entreaties.

Next day, the Duchess was buried in the local church, with ceremony of a kind (I have read the account of it). This

event, the news of which at once spread abroad, made but little impression, it had long been expected; her death had several times already been reported at Gallese and in Rome, and in any event an assassination outside the city and during a vacancy of the Holy See was nothing out of the common. The Conclave that followed the death of Paul IV was very stormy, and lasted for no less than four months.

On the 26th of December, 1559, the unfortunate Cardinal Carafa was obliged to concur in the election of a Cardinal supported by Spain, and unable, consequently, to decline to take any of the harsh measures which Philip II would invoke against Cardinal Carafa. The new Pope took the name of Pius IV.

Had the Cardinal not been in banishment at the moment of his uncle's death, he would have had control of the election, or at least would have been in a position to prevent the nomination of an enemy.

Soon after this, both the Cardinal and the Duke were arrested. King Philip's order was evidently that they should be put to death. They had to reply to fourteen separate charges. Everyone who could throw any light upon these charges was examined. The report, which is extremely well drafted, consists of two folio volumes, which I have read with great interest, because one finds on every page of them details of custom which the historians have not thought worthy of the solemn garb of history. I observed among others certain extremely picturesque details of an attempt at assassination aimed by the Spanish party against Cardinal Carafa, then the all-powerful Minister.

Anyhow, he and his brother were condemned for crimes which would not have been crimes in anyone else, that for instance of having put to death the lover of an unfaithful wife and the wife herself. A few years later, Prince Orsini married the sister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany; he suspected her of infidelity and had her poisoned in Tuscany itself, with the consent of the Grand Duke her brother, and yet this was never imputed to him as a crime. Several Princesses of the House of Medici died in this way.

When the trial of the two Carafa was ended, a long summary of it was prepared, and this, on several occasions, was examined by congregations of Cardinals. It is obvious that once it had been decided to punish with death a murder committed to avenge an act of adultery, a sort of crime to which justice never paid any attention, the Cardinal was guilty of having persecuted the Duke until the crime was committed, as the Duke was guilty of having ordered its execution.

On the 3rd of March, 1564, Pope Pius IV held a Consistory which lasted for eight hours, and at the end of which he pronounced sentence on the Carafa in the following words: "*Prout in schedula.*"

On the night of the 4th, the Fiscal sent the Bargello to the Castel Sant' Angelo, to carry out the sentence of death passed upon the two brothers, Carlo, Cardinal Carafa, and Giovanni, Duke of Palliano, which he did. They dealt first with the Duke. He was transferred from the Castel Sant' Angelo to the prisons of Tordinone, where everything was in readiness; it was there that the Duke, the Conte d'Aliffe and Don Leonardo del Cardine had their heads cut off.

The Duke bore that dread moment not merely like a gentleman of exalted birth, but like a Christian ready to endure all for the love of God. He addressed a few noble words to his two companions, encouraging them in the hour of death; then wrote to his son. [Footnote: The learned Signor Sismondi confuses the whole of this story. See the article *Carafa* in the *Biographie Michaud*; he maintains that it was the Conte di Montorio who had his head cut off on the day of the Cardinal's death. The Conte was father of the Cardinal and of the Duke of Palliano. The learned historian confuses the father with the son.]

The Bargello returned to the Castel Sant' Angelo, with an announcement of death to Cardinal Carafa, giving him no more than an hour to prepare himself. The Cardinal shewed a greater strength of character than his brother, all the more as he said less; speech is always a strength which one seeks outside oneself. He was heard only to mutter these words in a low tone, on receiving the grim tidings:

"I to die! O Pope Pius! O King Philip!"

He made his confession; repeated the seven Penitential Psalms, then sat down on a chair and said to the executioner:

"Proceed."

The executioner strangled him with a silken cord, which broke; he was obliged to make a second and a third attempt. The Cardinal looked at him without deigning to utter a word.

(*Note added.*)

Not many years later, the sainted Pope Pius V ordered a revision of the proceedings, which were annulled; the Cardinal and his brother had all their honours restored to them, and the Procurator General, who had done most to cause their death, was hanged. Pius V ordered the suppression of the report; all the copies existing in the libraries were burned; people were forbidden to preserve one on pain of excommunication: but the Pope forgot that he had a copy of the report in his own library, and it was from this copy that all those were made which we see today.